

# SOCIAL WORK, MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (157)

## Program Coordinator

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The Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Western Kentucky University (WKU) prepares students for professional social work practice at the graduate level to meet the needs of increasingly diverse rural populations. It is particularly dedicated to addressing the work-force needs of agencies that serve families and communities. Moreover, the MSW curriculum emphasizes social work practice at the advanced level in rural communities.

There are two program concentrations for students meeting the admission requirements outlined below. The Traditional Program concentration requires 60 semester hours for students with a baccalaureate degree in any field and may be taken full or part-time. The Advanced Standing Program concentration requires 30 semester hours for students who have earned a bachelor of social work (BSW) degree from an accredited social work program and who have fulfilled the additional admission requirements outlined below. The Advanced Standing concentration may be taken full or part-time as well. Both concentrations require students to complete SWRK 661 as a capstone course prior to graduation. This course integrates the entire curriculum in a comprehensive practice experience. Students are required to pass a comprehensive examination, the Practice Readiness Exam, prior to graduation.

## Program Admission

### Admission Requirements for the 60 hour Traditional Program Concentration

1. 2.75 or greater undergraduate degree GPA. Students with a lower GPA may apply for Alternate Admissions (See Alternate Admissions and Admissions Appeal Process).
2. A Western Kentucky University Master of Social Work program application, resume, goal statement, and writing sample.
3. Three completed WKU Master of Social Work program references.
4. Liberal arts background - at least 30 hours in liberal arts coursework in areas such as social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, communications, and mathematics. All courses counted towards the liberal arts requirement must have been completed with a final grade of "C" or higher. Applicants may be enrolled in liberal arts prerequisite courses while their MSW applications are being evaluated, but all of these courses must have been successfully completed before admission to the program. Offers of admission will be contingent upon the successful completion of all required courses.
5. An interview may be required.

### Alternate Admissions for the 60 hour Traditional Program

An applicant who believes that her/his individual circumstances warrant consideration for a waiver of the minimum admissions requirement of an undergraduate GPA of 2.75 must petition the MSW Program Director. Students must meet all other traditional program admission requirements. The request should be attached to the MSW application in the form of a statement entitled "Petition for Exceptional Consideration." The petition should include a statement indicating how failing to meet the minimum admission requirement of a 2.75 GPA does not adequately

represent the applicant's capabilities. The applicant should briefly discuss her/his demonstrated capacity for successful achievement of an arduous MSW program. For example, an applicant might provide evidence of:

1. Superior grades during the final semester(s) of work prior to graduation indicating a trend toward improved performance;
2. Competence through achievement in another graduate program;
3. Outstanding work experience in human services (volunteer or paid); and/or
4. Subsequent successful undergraduate or graduate level coursework.

The applicant should also discuss how she/he plans to address potential obstacles to successful completion of the program. Finally, the applicant should attest to the accuracy of all information provided in the petition, date and sign the document. The petition must be submitted with the application.

### Admission Requirements for the Advanced Standing Program Concentration

1. Completion of a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree at a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited institution within the previous seven years with at least a 3.0 undergraduate degree GPA, OR with a 2.75 to 2.99 undergraduate degree GPA and an interview may be considered for admission, as part of the application process.
2. Satisfactory completion of a minimum of 400 hours of educationally based field instruction in direct practice with individuals, families, groups, and communities under appropriate social work supervision. A copy of the student's final field evaluation must be submitted.
3. Completion of courses from the following subject areas within an accredited social work program at the upper-division (junior and senior) level with a grade of "C" or better in each course: Human Behavior and the Social Environment - one course; Social Welfare Policy and Services - one course; Social Work Practice - two courses to include study of intervention methods with individuals, families, small groups and communities; Social Work Research - one course in research methodology.
4. A Western Kentucky University Master of Social Work program application, resume, goal statement, and writing sample.
5. Three completed WKU Master of Social Work program references.
6. Liberal arts background - at least 30 hours in liberal arts coursework in areas such as social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, communications, and mathematics. All courses counted towards the liberal arts requirement must have been completed with a final grade of "C" or higher. Applicants may be enrolled in liberal arts prerequisite courses while their MSW applications are being evaluated, but all of these courses must have been successfully completed before admission to the program. Offers of admission will be contingent upon the successful completion of all required courses.
7. An interview may be required for purposes in addition to undergraduate GPA.

## Program Requirements (30-60 hours)

### Traditional Program Concentration (60 hours)

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Required Courses</b>		
SWRK 501	Diversity, Oppression, and Equity in Social Work Practice	3

SWRK 510	Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3
SWRK 520	Generalist Social Work Practice	3
SWRK 522	Group Dynamics in Social Work Practice	3
SWRK 523	Rural Community Organization and Development	3
SWRK 530	Foundation of Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK 540	Foundations of Social Work Research Methods	3
SWRK 560	Generalist Field Practicum I	3
SWRK 561	Generalist Field Practicum II	3
SWRK 610	Social Work Administration and Supervision	3
SWRK 620	Advanced Psycho-Social Approaches for Rural Practice	3
SWRK 622	Integrated Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWRK 623	Social Work Clinical Assessment and Intervention	3
SWRK 630	Rural Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK 640	Applied Social Work Research	3
SWRK 660	Advanced Generalist Field Practicum I	3
SWRK 661	Advanced Generalist Field Practicum II	3

<sup>1</sup> 3 hour elective may be taken in winter or summer term

#### Electives

Select 9 hours of graduate SWRK courses with advisor approval. Electives may also be selected from other disciplines, with advisor approval.	9
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**Total Hours** 60

### Advanced Standing Program Concentration (30 hours)

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Required Courses</b>		
SWRK 610	Social Work Administration and Supervision	3
SWRK 612	Social Work in Diverse Rural Areas	3
SWRK 620	Advanced Psycho-Social Approaches for Rural Practice	3
SWRK 622	Integrated Social Work Practice with Families	3
SWRK 623	Social Work Clinical Assessment and Intervention	3
SWRK 630	Rural Social Welfare Policy	3
SWRK 640	Applied Social Work Research	3
SWRK 660	Advanced Generalist Field Practicum I	3
SWRK 661	Advanced Generalist Field Practicum II	3

#### Electives

Select 3 hours of graduate SWRK courses with advisor approval. Electives may also be selected from other disciplines, with advisor approval. <sup>1</sup>	3
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**Total Hours** 30